

Message Text

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E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: PRESS AND PUBLIC

REF: (A) USNATO 4451; (B) USNATO 3829; (C) STATE 185002

1. WE SHARE MISSION CONCERN OVER PRESS LEAKS AND MEDIA
REACTION. REF (A) EXPRESSES VIEW THAT ALLIES WISH TO
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EXPAND AGREED AREA OF ALLOWABLE PUBLIC DISCUSSION, MOVING

IN DIRECTION OF MAXIMUM CONTROLLED RELEASE OF MAIN LINES OF WESTERN THINKING ON MBFR. WE FEEL THAT REF (C) REPRESENTS THE BEST APPROACH TO THESE ISSUES AT THIS TIME. IN ORDER TO MEET PRESENT NEEDS REGARDING INFORMATION POLICY AND TO HEAD OFF ANTICIPATED PRESS SPECULATION, MISSION CAN NOW DRAW ON GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTIONS LAID DOWN IN REF (C) IN ANTICIPATION OF ALLIED AGREEMENT ON THEM.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT WHAT IS PRIMARILY NEEDED FOR MEDIA AT PRESENT STAGE IS GENERAL TREATMENT OF BACKGROUND OF OVERALL NEGOTIATING PROBLEM, ON THE NATURE OF MBFR ISSUES RATHER THAN ON THEIR SPECIFICS. SOME OF THE ISSUES SUGGESTED IN REF (A) HAVE ARISEN IN PREPARATORY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ALLIED PARTNERS AND WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE PART OF THE FINAL AGREED NEGOTIATING POSITION. OTHER ISSUES ARE OF A COMPLEXITY AND DEGREE OF DETAIL WHICH AT THIS STAGE DEFIES USEFUL AND MEANINGFUL MEDIA BACKGROUNDING, OR THEY ARE PREMATURE FOR SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS NOW. WE

BELIEVE PRESS HANDLING SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THE MAJOR FOCUS OF OUR NEGOTIATING INTEREST IS TO ACHIEVE A MORE STABLE MILITARY BALANCE IN CENTRAL EUROPE AT LOWER LEVELS OF FORCES WITH UNDIMINISHED SECURITY.

3. (A). REF (A) CITES AS MOST IMPORTANT POINT FOR PERSUASIVE EXPLANATION TO MEDIA WESTERN APPROACH TO EVENTUAL COMMON CEILING PROPOSAL, NO DOUBT AS RESULT OF RECENT PRESS STORIES. WE AGREE THAT OUTPUT SHOULD BEGIN TO BUILD CASE FOR COMMON CEILING BY EMPHASIZING IN BACKGROUNDING THE DISPARITIES IN MANPOWER, EQUIPMENT AND GEOGRAPHY. COMMON CEILING CONCEPT ITSELF SHOULD NOT BE ADVANCED UNTIL AFTER ALLIANCE APPROACH IS AGREED WITHIN NATO AND PARLIAMENTS HAVE BEEN INFORMED, PER REF (C) PARA 4(F).

(B). CONCEPT OF SYMMETRY OF RESULTS COMPRISES RISK THAT IT COULD BE TAKEN TO REFER TO COMMON CEILING IN EQUIPMENT, E.G., TANKS. WE PREFER TO BUILD CASE ON COMMON CEILING IN MANPOWER. AN EXPLANATION OF CURRENT IMBALANCES WOULD CREATE SOME UNDERSTANDING OF THIS ISSUE.

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(C). CONSTRAINTS AND VERIFICATION. THE VERIFICATION ISSUE IS SO COMPLEX THAT EFFORTS TO EXPLAIN IT TO THE PRESS IN SPECIFIC TERMS WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AT THIS POINT. CONSTRAINTS IS AN ISSUE OF THE FUTURE, EQUALLY COMPLEX AND POSSIBLY BESET BY DIVERGENCIES OF VIEWS, THEREFORE BETTER NOT DISCUSSED IN DETAIL AT THIS TIME. THE OVERALL CASE FOR BOTH VERIFICATION AND CONSTRAINTS CAN BE MADE NOW AS LONG AS IT IS KEPT IN GEN-

ERAL TERMS, E.G., AGREEMENTS SHOULD BE ADEQUATELY VERIFIABLE.

(D). FORM OF REDUCTIONS. IT IS PREMATURE TO DEAL WITH THIS SUBJECT BEFORE ALLIES HAVE DEVELOPED THEIR REDUCTION PROPOSALS TO EAST. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD NOT BE TO OUR ADVANTAGE TO INTRODUCE THIS TOPIC, WHICH ALSO GETS INTO THE ISSUE OF COMPOSITION OF PHASE II, IN MEDIA BACKGROUNDING AT THIS POINT.

(E). WE BELIEVE THAT THE MBFR COMPLEXITIES THEME IS BETTER COVERED AS DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM. WE DO NOT WANT TO GIVE IMPRESSION THAT NEGOTIATING TASK IS SO DIFFICULT THAT NEGOTIATED OUTCOME IS IMPROBABLE. IF THE COMPONENTS OF THE NEGOTIATING PROBLEM ARE ADEQUATELY DESCRIBED, THE CONCEPT OF COMPLEXITY WILL BE CONVEYED AT THE SAME TIME.

4. WE SHARE MISSION VIEW THAT, WITH THE APPROACH OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS, PRESS LEAKS WILL HAVE TO BE ANTICIPATED

WITH GREATER FREQUENCY. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS IMPROBABLE THAT EVEN THE MOST FORTHCOMING MEDIA BACKGROUNDING COULD FULLY RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM. RUSH

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